

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards



Working For Kentucky's future ...
Our Children



*John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky*

Citizen Foster Care Review Boards play key role in Kentucky's child welfare system

As a former circuit judge, I have seen firsthand how important Citizen Foster Care Review Boards are to the foster-care system in Kentucky. CFCRB volunteers review the cases of thousands of children who have been removed from their homes due to dependency, neglect and abuse. Recommendations from these volunteers guide judges who must make critical decisions about placing children in safe, permanent homes.

CFCRB volunteers are mandated by statute to regularly review the case of every child during his or her commitment to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. During the past year, 142 review boards conducted more than 20,000 reviews of children in out-of-home care. The Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts provides administrative oversight to this program.

The 2008 CFCRB Annual Report will give you a better understanding of how Kentucky's child welfare system continues to improve through the use of new technology, new partnerships and new programs. I appreciate the dedicated CFCRB volunteers who care enough to help our children have a bright and promising future.



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Collaboration between the AOC and CHFS strengthens child welfare in Kentucky

Patrick Yewell, Executive Officer

Department of Family and Juvenile Services, Administrative Office of the Courts

CFCRB Executive Summary for FY 2008: July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

It is my pleasure to present the 2008 Citizen Foster Care Review Board Annual Report. More than 900 CFCRB volunteers across Kentucky provide a direct service to the judiciary by monitoring children placed in out-of-home care due to dependency, neglect and abuse. Volunteers also offer legislative recommendations to enhance services for children while working to ensure that every child can find a permanent home in a timely manner.

The CFCRB made significant strides in FY 2008:

- The number of CFCRB volunteers increased from 839 in FY 2007 to 937 in FY 2008.
- CFCRB members conducted 20,267 reviews on 9,899 children who were in the custody of or who had been committed to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) due to dependency, neglect and abuse.
- CFCRB members served 972 children through 160 statewide Interested Party Review Board meetings, a 28 percent increase in the number of children reviewed through IPR from FY 2007 to FY 2008.
- The average length of stay for children in foster care was 19.5 months, which is 1.3 months less than in FY 2007. Although the average length of stay continues to decrease each year, older children usually have longer stays in care than younger children do.
- Of the children reviewed by CFCRB volunteers, 44.3 percent were released from care through reunification with their parents or primary caregivers, an increase of 0.7 percent from FY 2007.
- Of the children in out-of-home care, 18.4 percent achieved permanency through adoption in FY 2008. Children who exited care due to a finalized adoption spent an average of 32.8 months in care.
- The 2008 Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 188, allowing circuit court clerks to electronically transmit data on dependency,

neglect and abuse cases from the KYCourts II system to CATS, the Children's Automated Tracking System. This process addresses past inefficiencies regarding data collection, case management and reporting mechanisms.

- Based on discussions between the Administrative Office of the Courts and the CHFS, lists of cases coming up for review are now sent electronically to offices of the Department for Community Based Services. This helps keep case reviews of foster children on schedule.

The Kentucky Court of Justice hosted the first Kentucky Summit on Children in Louisville in August 2007. The Summit attracted nearly 600 attendees, including justices, judges, legislators, attorneys, child welfare and juvenile justice system personnel, advocates, foster parents and service providers.

Following the Summit, which was an immense success, more than 1,300 local professionals attended nine regional summits across the commonwealth. These meetings focused on topics regarding the welfare of children:

- Overcoming barriers to justice.
- Implementing best practices to promote safety, permanency and well-being.
- Understanding parameters while promoting the accountability of courts.
- Identifying at-risk juveniles and the juvenile justice system.
- Combating truancy.
- Developing action plans.

A University of Kentucky School of Social Work report on the outcome of these meetings identified systemic problems with transparency, miscommunication among professionals, lack of resources, inadequate diversion programs

and competent legal representation. As a result, administrative procedures are being developed regarding dependency, neglect and abuse cases.

The Kentucky Summit on Children had an impact beyond our expectations. Following discussions about transparency of the courts, legislation was introduced in FY 2008 to implement pilot sites that would open up juvenile proceedings to the public. Although the bill did not pass, it opened the door for discussions on a bipartisan level.

Legislation was also filed to address gaps in legal representation for children to ensure that guardians ad litem would be appointed prior to the removal hearing through the termination of parental rights. While the legislation did not pass in 2008, an increase in fees might be reintroduced in a future legislative session. GALs have not received an increase for services since the 1980s.

The legislation also addressed adequate representation for children and families by providing

attorneys for indigent parents in termination of parental rights proceedings and appeals. Additional initiatives that deserve mention are the Fayette County Model Court Pilot Project, preparations for the Hardin County Cross Professional Conference in January 2009, the Interstate Placement of Children Assessment, and the ongoing expansion of Family Drug Court and Juvenile Drug Court statewide.

CFCRB State Chair Charlene Greer has played a key role in CFCRB initiatives and accomplishments the past two years. It has been an honor to work with her. Her commitment to enhancing the lives of the children in the commonwealth has been apparent through her work with Blueprint for Kentucky's Children, the 2009 Advocacy Day and the long hours she has spent promoting the great work of the CFCRB.

Once again, I want to commend the state's CFCRB volunteers for their selfless devotion to improving the lives of Kentucky's foster children.



CFCRB MISSION

To ensure safe, permanent, timely placement of Kentucky's children in out-of-home care.

CFCRB VISION

- » With respect to children in care – To ensure adequate and necessary services are provided to families and children with the utmost importance given to safety, well-being and permanency.
- » With respect to the judges we serve – To provide timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed information about children in care so as to promote knowledgeable permanency decisions.
- » With respect to CFCRB volunteers – To promote awareness and understanding regarding children's issues through educational opportunities at local, regional and state levels.
- » With respect to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services – To provide meaningful, respectful feedback regarding paths to permanency.



Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards 2008 Recommendations for Legislative and Policy Reform

Kentucky Revised Statutes 620.320(5) require the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards to evaluate and make annual recommendations to the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the governor and the Legislative Research Commission regarding the laws of the commonwealth and the practices, policies and procedures within the commonwealth affecting permanence for children in out-of-home placement.

1. Continue to increase independent living services for Kentucky's foster youth, including consistent opportunities statewide. Include better documentation of independent living skills in Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) case files.
2. Ensure the timely implementation by the CHFS of concurrent planning practices statewide and document these practices in case files.
3. Provide accessible drug/alcohol treatment programs for parents whose children are in the custody of the CHFS and ensure compliance with aftercare requirements through Family Drug Court.
4. Increase fees paid to and training for guardians ad litem.
5. Monitor private child-care placements and require these facilities to provide documentation to the CHFS.
6. Advocate increasing the number of foster homes (including therapeutic foster homes) and pre-adoptive homes.
7. Examine timelines under which the CHFS and court system operate regarding parents involved in treatment programs while their children are in CHFS custody.
8. Increase funding to expand CHFS staff and resources, including funding for safe visitation sites.
9. Continue providing funding for education about child protection for all professionals who practice in Juvenile Court and Family Court.
10. Ensure that all efforts are made to keep children in their school districts after they have been removed from the home.
11. Provide funding for and implement electronic filing of court records.
12. Monitor the quality of mental and physical health and educational services provided to children in CHFS custody, especially those who are moved frequently, and include documentation of these services in CHFS case files.
13. Encourage the judiciary and the legislature to be involved in the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards process.
14. Encourage judges, at all court hearings, to clearly state processes and consequences to parents involved in dependency, neglect and abuse cases.
15. Continue to support collaborative efforts between the Judicial Branch and the CHFS.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Out-of-Home Care Demographics

? What are the ages of children in foster care?

A: Of the 9,899 children who received reviews by a Citizen Foster Care Review Board in FY 2008, the youngest was nearly 6 months old (0.56 years) and the oldest was nearly 23 years old (22.56 years) due to extended commitment. The average age was 10.26 years. The number of foster children younger than age 5 was 3,240, an increase of 706 from the last fiscal year.

By Age	# of Children
0-5 Years	3,240
6-10 Years	2,060
11-15 Years	2,077
16-20 Years	2,446
21 Years & Older	76
Total	9,899

The age analysis is based on children who were in out-of-home care on June 30, 2007, and includes children who were released from custody any time during the fiscal year. Of the children reviewed, 33 were reviewed solely by an Interested Party Review Board and therefore do not appear in the review figures on page 9.

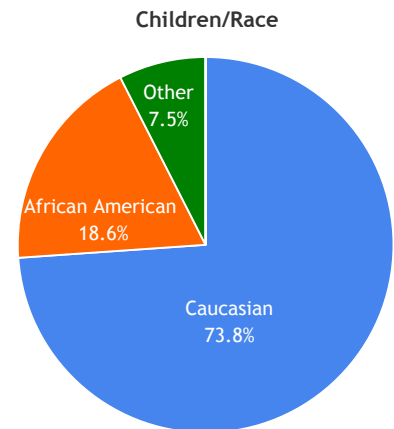
Children Reviewed	9,899
Lowest Age	0.56
Highest Age	22.56
Average Age	10.26

? What is the gender of children placed in foster care?

A: The number of males and females in out-of-home care are equal.

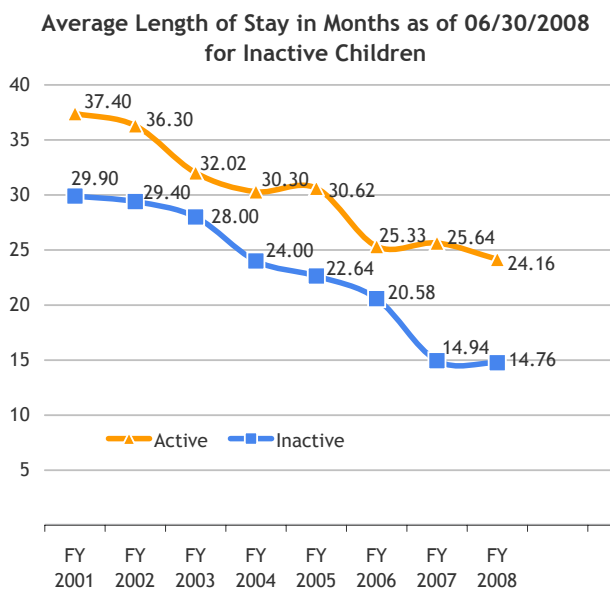
? What is the race of children in foster care?

A: The children in foster care are 73.8 percent Caucasian, 18.6 percent African-American and 7.5 other.



Time in Out-of-Home Care

? What is the average length of stay by age group for children in out-of home care?



A: Active children – children who were still in care at the end of FY 2008 – experienced an average length of stay of 24.16 months. Inactive children – children released at any time during the fiscal year – experienced an average stay of 14.76 months.

Note: Statistics captured in this chart represent all children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008. The term “active children” describes children whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year and who were still in care on June 30, 2008. “Inactive children” describes those whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year but released prior to June 30, 2008.

The chart illustrates the average length of stay for children by age. Although the overall average length of stay continues to decrease, older children still experience longer stays in care than younger children do.

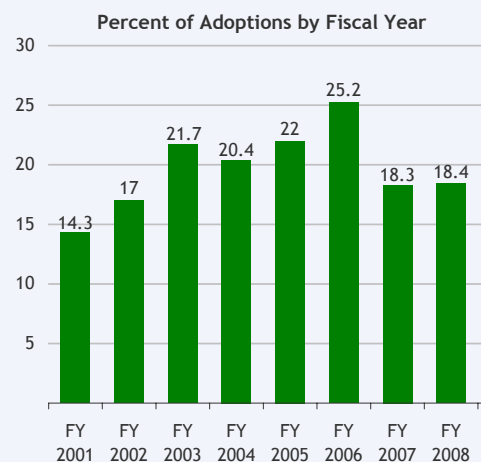
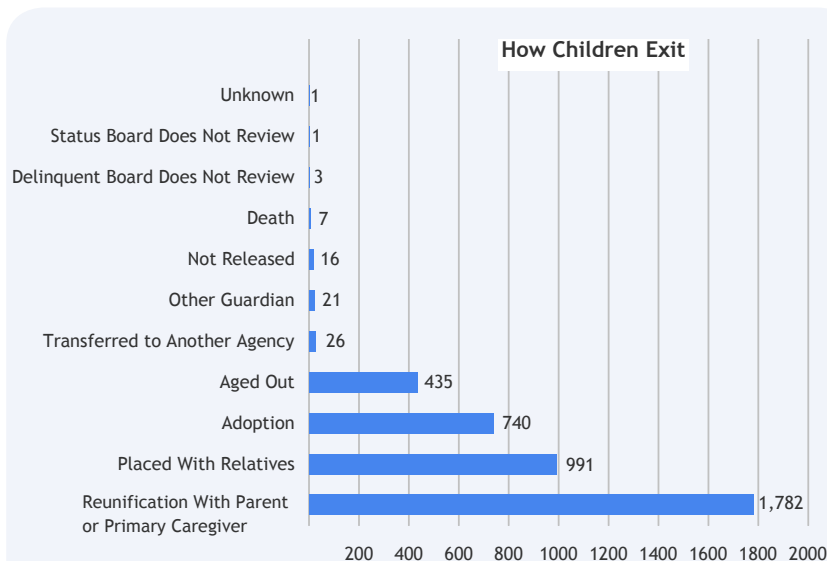
Average Length of Stay in Months as of 06/30/2008

Age in Years	Active	Inactive	All Children
0-5 Years	15.28	10.36	12.44
6-10 Years	18.77	12.81	15.68
11-15 Years	24.13	12.8	19.49
Over 15 Years	37.97	26.39	32.75
Overall	24.16	14.76	19.49

Exiting Out-of-Home Care

? For what reasons did children exit from out-of-home care?

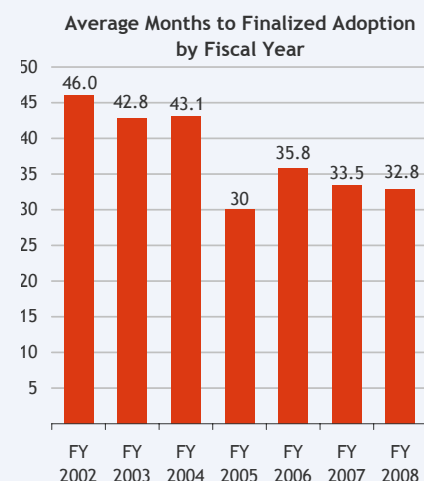
A: The CFCRB determined that the majority of children – 44.3 percent – were released from care through reunification with parents or primary caregivers. This is an increase of 0.7 from FY 2007. The chart shows how the other 55.7 percent of children exited care.



? What percentage of children in out-of-home care were adopted?

A: Of children released from out-of-home care, 18.4 percent achieved permanency through adoption in FY 2008. Children who exited care because of a finalized adoption spent 32.8 months in care prior to adoption. The following two charts present the percentage of adoptions and average months to finalize adoptions by fiscal year.

Note: The variance in the statistical comparison between FY 2005 and 2006 may be due to the implementation of the Children's Automated Tracking System (CATS). In FY 2005, the reasons for release were gathered from individual CFCRB case reviews. With CATS in place, the reason for release was obtained primarily through downloads from TWIST, the CHFS data tracking system.



Placement Stability



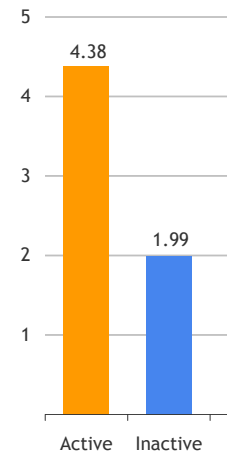
What do fewer out-of-home placements mean for children in foster care?

A: Fewer placements create stability.

In FY 2008, children experienced 3.14 placements per commitment. This is a .47 percent drop from FY 2007 in the average number of placements.

The CHFS is responsible for determining a stable placement for the children in its care by considering the least restrictive and most appropriate placement for each child. The CHFS may change the placement of a child for a variety of reasons, including safety concerns, the need to provide more services and to protect the child.

Average Placements



Establishing Permanency Goals



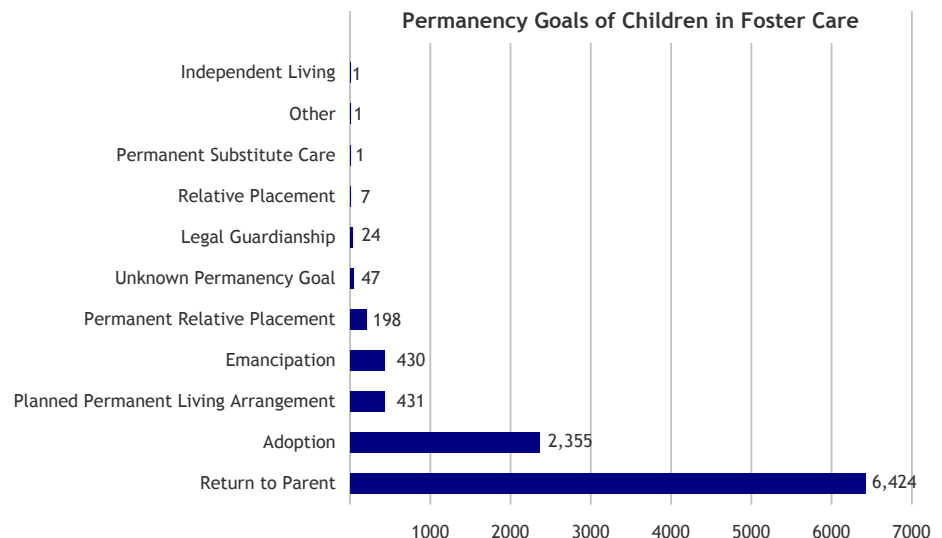
How is the permanency goal established and defined?

A: The CHFS establishes a permanency plan for each child who enters foster care and his or her biological family. The plan is filed with the court and addresses the reason the child is in custody. It is also an action plan for the time the child is in foster care. The chart defines permanency goals that have been established for children.



Children who remain in the custody of the CHFS for 12 months after their initial placement receive a permanency hearing through the local court to determine their future status. At this hearing, the court addresses whether the child should be returned to the parents, placed for adoption, placed with a permanent custodian or provided with another type of permanent living arrangement.

Permanency Goals of Children in Foster Care



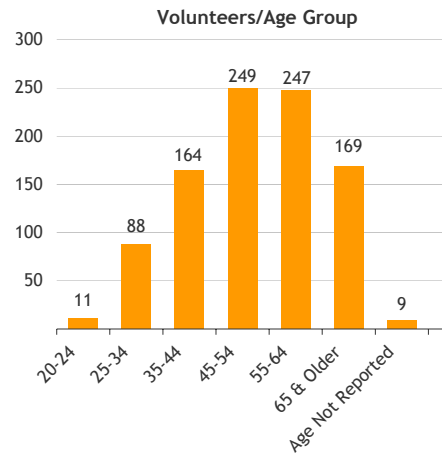
CFCRB Overview

? What is the Citizen Foster Care Review Board?

A: The CFCRB provides recommendations to judges on Kentucky's foster children so that they may be placed in safe, permanent homes. These dependent, neglected and abused children are in the custody of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS).

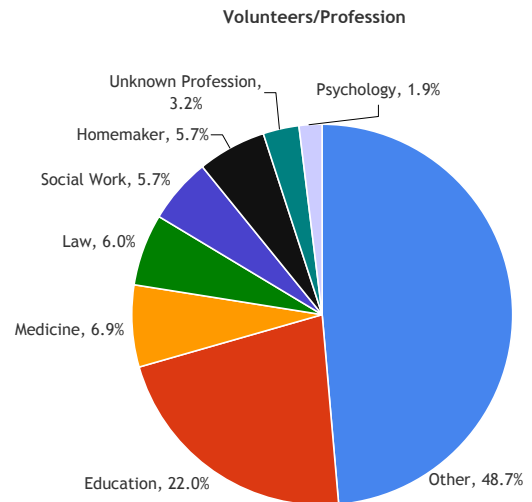
The Kentucky General Assembly created the CFCRB in 1982 to decrease the amount of time children spend in foster care. The CFCRB operates within the Division of Dependent Children's Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort. The AOC is the operational arm of the Kentucky Court of Justice.

Today there are more than 900 CFCRB volunteers who serve on 142 local boards throughout the state. In FY 2008, volunteers held 1,258 meetings and conducted 20,267 reviews on 9,899 children in out-of-home care.



? Who are CFCRB volunteers?

A: CFCRB volunteers give their time and efforts to advocate for dependent, neglected and abused children in their communities. Volunteers have a variety of educational and professional backgrounds and a deep compassion for children. The majority of volunteers are female. The average age of volunteers is 53. The average length of service is 5.2 years.



? What are the requirements for becoming a CFCRB volunteer?

A: Those interested in volunteering must complete an initial six-hour training session and consent to a criminal record and central registry check. New volunteers are trained in:

- CHFS and local Department for Community Based Services procedures.
- Dependency, neglect and abuse case forms.
- Court processes.
- Mental health needs of children in out-of-home care.
- Process for conducting a file review.

Once a volunteer has completed this training, a recommendation is made to the chief judge of the local District Court or Family Court for the volunteer to be appointed to the local board. Judges appoint volunteers for three-year terms. Volunteers receive a comprehensive handbook on the program and information on opportunities to earn the required six hours of annual continuing education.

? What cases do CFCRB volunteers review? What statute allows members to conduct reviews?

A: Pursuant to KRS 620.270, children and young adults in the temporary custody of the CHFS who are committed as dependent, neglected or abused, regardless of placement, are subject to review by a CFCRB. This includes adults whose commitments are extended, children placed for adoptions that are not finalized and children who are returned home but remain committed. Children and adults originally committed as dependent, neglected or abused but recommitted as status or public offenders are also subject to review, provided the commitment was not interrupted. A District Court or Family Court judge may also issue an order for the CFCRB to review status commitments.

? What resources are needed to conduct a review?

A: The CFCRB reviews the case of each child or young adult who is in temporary custody or is committed by the court in the county or counties served by the board. Each CFCRB shall have access to all information and records of the CHFS pertinent to the parents or person exercising custodial control or supervision for the child being reviewed. The board also has access to all pertinent information and records of the court, the CHFS, and public and private child-care facilities for the child the CFCRB is reviewing. Information and records include, but are not limited to, case permanency plans, case progress reports and case records. There are paper reviews and interactive reviews, which are also called Interested Party Reviews.

? How often are reviews conducted?

A: The CFCRB may review a case as often as possible, but no less than once every six months. The CFCRB reports its findings to the court and the CHFS.

? Where are reviews conducted?

A: The chief District Court or Family Court judge designates the location of the review. Reviews may be conducted at the local Department for Community Based Services office. If the review is not held during regular work hours, the Department for Community Based Services shall arrange access to its office.

2007 Regional Trainings

Date	Location	Volunteers Trained
July 28	Bowling Green	21
Aug. 11	Owensboro	20
Aug. 11	Somerset	48
Aug. 25	Highland Heights	25
Aug. 25	Carter Caves State Resort Park	15
Sept. 15	Murray	30
Sept. 22	Louisville	41
Oct. 6	Lexington	33
Oct. 27	Jenny Wiley State Resort Park	16
		Total 249

? If a child moves to another county due to a pre-adoptive placement or if the CHFS has moved the child without filing, where are CFCRB reviews conducted?

A: Pursuant to KRS 620.270(1), responsibility for reviewing cases remains with the local CFCRB that serves the county of commitment/temporary custody.

? When does the CFCRB stop conducting reviews?

A: Pursuant to KRS 620.270, reviews by a CFCRB shall cease when the CHFS is no longer legally responsible for the child or adult. The case record shall contain documentation that the commitment of the child or adult has been rescinded.

Record number of volunteers attend regional trainings

A record number of CFCRB volunteers – 249 – attended nine regional trainings held across Kentucky from July through October 2007. The sites for the nine trainings were Bowling Green, Carter Caves State Resort Park, Highland Heights, Jenny Wiley State Resort Park, Lexington, Louisville, Murray, Owensboro and Somerset. The locations were chosen to make the trainings convenient for the volunteers. The regional trainings provided an opportunity for CFCRB volunteers to obtain the required six hours of annual continuing education.

The CFCRB Training and Development Committee developed the training agenda on topics of interest to CFCRB members statewide. Among the topics addressed were Developmental Concerns for Younger Children in Care: Birth to 5 Years of Age, Cultural Awareness and the Effects of Family Drug/Alcohol Addiction on Children in Care. Field coordinators were instrumental in securing presenters and sites and attending the regional trainings. Many community partners served as presenters, such as the CHFS, Head Start, community mental health programs, Drug Court and certified foster parents of medically fragile children.

The Recognition Committee and local judges presented CFCRB members with service awards. They also gave 11 individuals an Outstanding CFCRB Volunteer Award to honor their dedication to the children they serve.

CFCRB ACTIVITY BY REVIEW BOARD FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

	Reviews	Children Reviewed		Reviews	Children Reviewed
ADAIR	41	30	JEFFERSON 9	293	131
ALLEN	80	40	JESSAMINE	106	62
ANDERSON	78	42	JOHNSON	108	60
BALLARD/CARLISLE	38	14	KENTON A	220	118
BARREN	147	79	KENTON B	92	60
BATH/MENIFEE	46	33	KENTON C	422	197
BELL	88	51	KENTON D	320	140
BOONE/GALLATIN	139	64	KENTON E	167	62
BOURBON	145	65	KENTON F	116	73
BOYD A	183	99	KNOTT	92	39
BOYD B	175	103	KNOX	84	58
BOYLE	133	78	LARUE	60	35
BRACKEN/ROBERTSON	52	23	LAUREL 1	229	163
BREATHITT	48	22	LAWRENCE	77	41
BRECKINRIDGE	95	54	LEE/OWSLEY	95	66
BULLITT	138	78	LESLIE	55	38
BUTLER	69	50	LETCHER	58	39
CALDWELL	24	15	LEWIS	48	21
CALLOWAY	157	80	LINCOLN	66	41
CAMPBELL A	211	90	LIVINGSTON	8	6
CAMPBELL B	265	98	LOGAN	69	50
CARROLL	56	21	LYON	18	5
CARTER	63	53	MADISON A	124	44
CASEY	13	9	MADISON B	281	142
CHRISTIAN	147	73	MAGOFFIN	169	92
CLARK	284	97	MARION/WASHINGTON	99	56
CLAY	243	159	MARSHALL	108	58
CLINTON	33	21	MARTIN	73	36
CRITTENDEN	25	12	MASON	18	13
DAVISS A	263	180	MCCRACKEN A	320	93
DAVISS B	236	143	MCCRACKEN B	158	79
EDMONSON	85	56	MCCREARY	136	87
ELLIOTT	78	23	MCLEAN	42	17
ESTILL	105	52	MEADE	86	51
FAYETTE A	216	108	MERCER	97	53
FAYETTE B	254	106	METCALFE	39	18
FAYETTE C	201	88	MONROE/CUMBERLAND	80	30
FAYETTE D	216	84	MONTGOMERY	35	19
FAYETTE E	199	91	MORGAN	56	18
FAYETTE F	257	97	MUHLENBERG	79	38
FAYETTE G	235	94	NELSON	50	33
FAYETTE H	196	80	NICHOLAS	3	3
FAYETTE I	237	72	OHIO	83	55
FAYETTE J	222	104	OLDHAM	58	25
FLEMING	31	20	OWEN	31	14
FLOYD	152	89	PERRY	302	157
FRANKLIN	200	83	PIKE	242	143
FULTON/HICKMAN	67	43	POWELL	136	45
GARRARD	99	53	PULASKI	240	145
GRANT	96	37	ROCKCASTLE	171	105
GRAVES	130	69	ROWAN	169	75
GRAYSON	314	179	RUSSELL	46	40
GREEN	33	17	SCOTT	277	115
GREENUP	240	118	SHELBY	205	122
HANCOCK	36	15	SIMPSON	55	37
HARDIN A	281	115	SPENCER	36	24
HARDIN B	179	86	TAYLOR	54	34
HARLAN	171	128	TODD	17	12
HARRISON/PENDLETON	57	37	TRIGG	43	17
HART	88	44	UNION	15	15
HENDERSON	140	81	WARREN A	344	220
HENRY/TRIMBLE	96	49	WARREN B	321	177
HOPKINS	187	111	WARREN C	10	10
JACKSON	52	31	WAYNE	63	42
JEFFERSON 1	519	242	WEBSTER	29	22
JEFFERSON 10	322	128	WHITLEY	226	145
JEFFERSON 2	391	173	WOLFE	35	26
JEFFERSON 3	404	144	WOODFORD	107	38
JEFFERSON 4	363	160	STATEWIDE	20,267	9,866
JEFFERSON 5	266	127			
JEFFERSON 6	419	178			
JEFFERSON 7	271	122			
JEFFERSON 8	276	126			

Interactive reviews on the rise statewide

In FY 2008, 972 children were reviewed via 160 Interested Party Review board meetings and Montgomery and Union counties transitioned from paper to interactive reviews.

IPR is an interactive interview process that involves Citizen Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB) volunteers, parents, care providers, service providers, attorneys and Cabinet for Health and Family Services personnel (CHFS).

Children who are in CHFS custody due to dependency, neglect or abuse can be reviewed through this interactive process. CFCRB volunteers, judges and CHFS staff may refer cases for an IPR and that practice is encouraged. Cases are chosen based on the six-month administrative review schedule.

The 18 IPR boards are comprised of CFCRB volunteers who serve on local boards within regions and who have acquired additional training specific to the IPR process. One board meeting can include up to four cases. The IPR focuses on case plans for parents and children, including the progress being made to secure permanency for the child. Following the interactive review, a field coordinator compiles the IPR board's findings and recommendations into a thorough report for the judge involved in the case.

IPR Board	IPR Reviews	Children Reviewed
Barren River	70	70
Big Sandy	47	47
Bluegrass Rural	67	65
Cumberland Valley	61	60
Fayette	53	53
FIVCO	53	51
Gateway/Buffalo Trace	50	48
Green River	60	60
Jefferson	52	52
Kentucky River	64	64
KIPDA Rural	60	60
Lake Cumberland	69	69
Lincoln Trail	63	63
Montgomery	5	5
Northern Kentucky	48	48
Pennyrile	80	80
Purchase	65	64
Union	21	13
Statewide	988	972

Since the inception of the IPR Pilot Project in November 2004, 2,441 children have been reviewed. The 16 IPR regions became operational in October 2006, making the interactive review process available statewide.

Interested Party Review Regions

Region	Location
Barren River	Bowling Green
Big Sandy	Prestonsburg
Bluegrass Rural	Lexington
Cumberland Valley	London
Fayette	Lexington
FIVCO	Ashland
Gateway/Buffalo Trace	Morehead
Green River	Owensboro
Jefferson	Louisville
Kentucky River	Hazard
KIPDA Rural	Shelbyville
Lake Cumberland	Somerset
Lincoln Trail	Elizabethtown
Northern Kentucky	Florence
Pennyrile	Hopkinsville
Purchase	Mayfield

Court Improvement Program supports the CFCRB

The Kentucky Court Improvement Program (CIP) continues to support the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards through improved education, an enhanced electronic case management system and the expanded Interested Party Review Program.

In addition to supporting CFCRB volunteers, the CIP has developed other initiatives to promote the safety and well-being of children in foster care:

- Fayette County Model Court Pilot Project
- Preparation for the Hardin County Summit Follow-up Conference (January 2009)
- Education for attorneys, Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) personnel and judicial support staff
- Assessment of Interstate Placement of Children Program (children placed outside of Kentucky)
- Expansion of Family Drug Court and Juvenile Drug Court
- Development of CIP Task Force/Advisory Board
- Continued Collaboration with the CHFS
- Continued expansion of CATS, the Children's Automated Tracking System

CATS tracking streamlines process for case reviews

Collaborative efforts between the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services have enabled the CHFS to receive electronic notification about children the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards have selected for review.

The Children's Automated Tracking System, or CATS, collects and generates names of children who, by statute, are eligible for review and sends this list electronically to the CHFS. Transmitting information electronically eliminates the time and expense of mailing and faxing.

CATS also improves how the AOC is notified when a child enters the foster care system through weekly downloads of information from TWIST, the CHFS data management system. AOC personnel have the ability to view information on any child in the system through TWIST.

The purpose of CATS is to serve as a source of case information for the AOC, the CHFS, judges and local review boards. It also helps the AOC fulfill statutory reporting requirements, pursuant to KRS 620.320, that requires specific information be reported to the legislature, the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the governor on behalf of the CFCRB.

Detailed reports on the outcome of children in foster care have allowed judges and local CHFS offices to enhance services. The recent passage of Senate Bill 188 allows circuit court clerks in all 120 counties to electronically transmit court information on dependency, neglect and abuse cases, which is stored in CATS. This process eliminates the practice of circuit clerks providing paper copies of court forms in DNA cases to the AOC for the review boards.

Using one application to store information from the courts, the CHFS and local review boards is making

it possible for these processes to be developed:

- Electronic notification of the next annual permanency review.
- Notification to the court and the CHFS about non-compliant cases, allowing for follow up and possible permanency plan changes.
- Enhanced electronic notification to the courts and the CHFS of discrepancies between court orders and the CHFS's case file.
- Detailed reports to allow data collected by the CFCRB to be shared with current and future partnerships.

Meanwhile, Court Improvement Program funds are allowing CATS to create a program that will track juvenile court cases and children placed in out-of-home care outside of Kentucky.

In the future, CATS applications may allow users to view information regarding the court status of juvenile cases through a Kentucky Court of Justice state-wide tracking system.

The addition of an interstate placement area to the findings and recommendation form will enable data to be collected and stored on children placed in care outside of Kentucky. This will allow an annual assessment of interstate placements of children and ensure that services are being offered and used.

CATS data will highlight areas of DNA proceedings that need improvement, including the timely filing of termination of parental rights petitions, permanency hearings and placement stability.

CATS helps ensure that the case of every child in state custody has the opportunity to be reviewed by the CFCRB and allows for more timely notification of cases for review.



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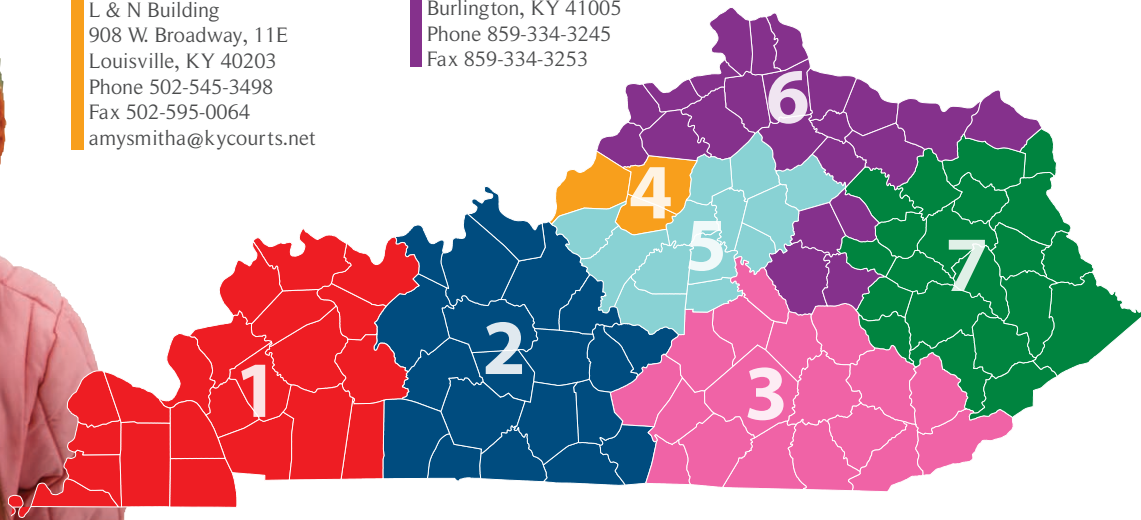
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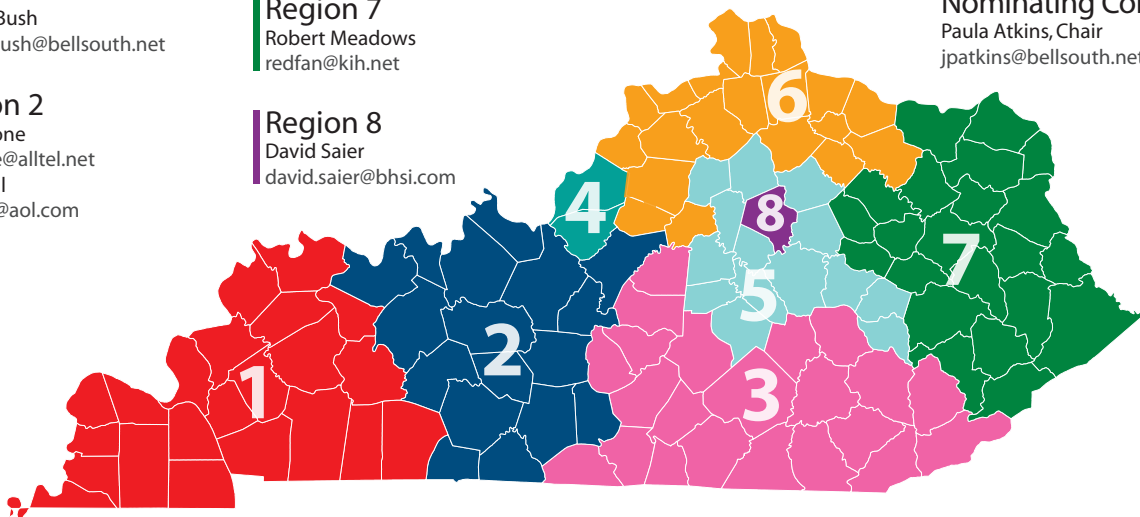
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Submitted pursuant to Kentucky Revised Statutes 620.320.

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P-75, Printed With State and Federal Funds, February 2009

Disclaimer on Statistics in this Report

Information received from the CATS electronic case management system is subject to changes, reprogramming, modifications of format and availability at the direction of the Administrative Office of the Courts and may not at any particular moment reflect the true status of court cases due to ordinary limitations, delays or errors in the system's operation.